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## Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 51st meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 13 March 2000, at 10 a.m.

*Chairman* Mr. Darwish (Vice-Chairman) (Egypt)
*Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Mselle

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*In the absence of Ms. Wensley (Australia), Mr. Darwish (Egypt), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Organization of work** (A/C.5/54/1/Add.4; A/C.5/54/L.40 and A/C.5/54/L.41)

1. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to document A/C.5/54/1/Add.4, which contained a letter dated 2 March 2000 from the President of the General Assembly informing the Chairman of the Fifth Committee of the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 90th plenary meeting to allocate to the Fifth Committee agenda item 175, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

2. The Committee's attention was also drawn to document A/C.5/54/L.40, which listed the documentation to be considered by the Fifth Committee at the first part of the resumed session and indicated the status of preparation of the new reports that had been requested under the various items.

3. **Mr. Acakpo-Satchivi** (Secretary of the Committee) updated the Committee on the status of preparation of the outstanding reports listed in document A/C.5/54/L.40.

4. **The Chairman** drew the Committee's attention to the note by the Bureau contained in document A/C.5/54/L.41 concerning the organization of its work at the first part of the resumed session of the General Assembly. In paragraphs 3 and 4 of that document, the Bureau recommended to the Fifth Committee that it should postpone consideration of a number of reports to the second part of the resumed fifty-fourth session and to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, respectively.

5. **Mr. Ramos** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, and, in addition, Iceland and Norway, said that the Committee should review its method of work with a view to making it more economical, effective and efficient. It should adopt a more focused and pragmatic approach in dealing with its heavy workload. Whenever possible, it should simply take note of undisputed reports and move on.

6. While the European Union was generally pleased with the Committee's proposed programme of work, it would welcome the early consideration of pending reports on results-based budgeting. It was aware, however, that, given its workload, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions would find it impractical to consider those reports at the current stage.

7. The Secretariat should submit reports to the Committee on a timely basis. The European Union noted, for example, that the Secretary-General had not yet submitted the report on the administrative and financial issues concerning the Non-Governmental Organizations Section, which the General Assembly had requested in paragraph 93 of its resolution 54/249. Consideration should be given to the staffing and structure of that Section, especially in view of the additional requirements that might have arisen since the preparation of the budget. In consultation with the Secretariat and the Advisory Committee, the Bureau should therefore consider whether the report could be provided to the Committee for action at the current part of the resumed session.

8. **Mr. Hassan** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the chronic problem of late submission of documents must be seriously addressed through compliance with the six-week rule and full implementation of General Assembly resolution 53/208. He would also welcome clarification from the Secretariat as to the reasons for its non-compliance with the General Assembly's decisions concerning the format of reports contained in resolutions 51/211 B and 53/208 B.

9. The proposed programme of work covered nearly all the issues outstanding from the main part of the fifty-fourth session — it should be streamlined so that items considered by delegations to be of greatest priority could receive full consideration. Sufficient time must be allocated to the agenda items on the scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations, programme planning, the programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001, improving the financial situation of the United Nations, human resources management, gratis personnel and pattern of conferences. The remaining items could be considered towards the end of the session, if time allowed. In any event, there should be no evening or night meetings at the current part of the resumed session.

10. The Group of 77 and China attached great importance to the strengthening of the Non-Governmental Organizations Section of the Secretariat and would like a clear explanation from the Secretariat as to the reasons for the delay in the submission of the report requested in paragraph 93 of resolution 54/249. The report should be issued no later than 15 April.

11. **Mr. Monayair** (Kuwait), having endorsed the statement made by the Nigerian representative on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that he was surprised by the recommendation to postpone consideration of the question of the payment of mission subsistence allowance in connection with the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) to the second part of the resumed session. Such a recommendation was invalid in that it conflicted with the decision already adopted to include the question in the programme of work for the first part of the resumed session. The question should remain in the programme of work for the first part of the resumed session pending clarification of the reason for the failure of the Secretariat to submit the relevant report, to which his delegation attached great importance.

12. **The Chairman** said that the Secretariat would take note of the comments made by the representative of Kuwait.

13. He said that he took it that the Committee agreed with the recommendation of the Bureau to postpone consideration of the reports listed in paragraphs 3 and 4 of document A/C.5/54/L.41 and those which had been referred to by the Secretary of the Committee to the second part of the resumed fifty-fourth session and to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, respectively.

14. *It was so decided.*

15. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee wished to approve the programme of work that had just been circulated and which took into account the comments and observations that had been made during the meeting.

16. *It was so decided.*

**Other matters**

17. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the service provided by the Café Vienna in the first basement had declined in the sense that it no longer opened at times when few meetings were taking place on the ground that there was "no demand for business". He objected to those restricted opening hours, particularly since the primary purpose of the Café was to provide services to delegates, a fact which should be taken into consideration by all those responsible for outsourced contracts. Outsourcing United Nations activities to private companies diluted the international character of the Organization, and he sought an assurance that the Café would extend its opening hours to 6 p.m. and remain open even when only one meeting was in progress.

18. **The Chairman** said that he would convey the comments of the Syrian representative to those concerned.

19. **Ms. Silot Bravo** (Cuba) said that her delegation was in agreement with the Committee's programme of work. It was concerned, however, at the delay in the completion of the long-term programme for capital improvements and upgrading of the United Nations facilities. She hoped that the capital master plan, along with proposals for its implementation, would be submitted for the Committee's consideration at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

*The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.*